

States" (264).

The Robertses set out to write about Barclay's "life and times." In delineating the "supporting role" Barclay played to the founding fathers, they succeed in returning a previously lesser-known, and yet important, Philadelphian to the context of his times (19). Along the way, readers see the complex and dangerous "ins" and "outs" of eighteenth-century business and international affairs. Those interested in Barclay, early diplomacy, and business practices will find this work a useful monograph.

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The Political Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin. By LORRAINE SMITH PANGLE.
(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. 278 pp. Notes, recommended readings, index. \$20.95.)

In *The Political Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin*, Lorraine Smith Pangle returns to the preoccupations of her earlier work. Her first book (with Thomas L. Pangle), *The Learning of Liberty: The Educational Ideas of the American Founders* (1993), spoke to the classical foundations of American educational ideals and described the educational goals of Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, Noah Webster, and others. According to the Pangles, the founders' beliefs, formulated around classical educational models along with John Locke's theories of learning, centered upon creating an enlightened self-interest in students that would lead to virtuous action. Smith Pangle returned to the theme of self-interested virtue, in *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (2002), by focusing on moral choice and the positive function of self-interest in friendship.

This most recent contribution on Benjamin Franklin revises some of the more engaging aspects of the earlier work. Smith Pangle examines Franklin's views and his educational program on behalf of the cultivation of morality, civic virtue (including the ideal of political liberty), and the intellectual life of social beings. While offering a synoptic view of some of the more tangled aspects of Franklin's thinking and his career, Pangle (frequently labeling as "ambiguities" any conflicts in his expressions) places Franklin in the stream of classical learning and of nineteenth- and twentieth-century tendencies to link Franklin with bourgeois capitalist notions. She concludes that "If our quarrel is with modernity and the soulless, humorless spirit of capitalism, we cannot lay the fault at Franklin's door. . . . He represents the best of America and a human type that the world would have been much poorer never to have seen" (223).

Smith Pangle begins with the astounding assessment—especially for a book purporting to be on Franklin's political philosophy—that "Franklin never wrote

a political treatise or even devised an important political doctrine”(2). Most of us who study Franklin and his political life and times will disagree with such an assertion. Smith Pangle does not take up Franklin’s *Narrative of the Late Massacres* (1764), and she merely mentions (rather than spending sustained time with) Franklin’s *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* (1751; mentioned pp. 38, 136) and his *Interest of Great Britain Considered with Regard to Her Colonies* (1760; mentioned p. 158). But Smith Pangle’s project is weighted more toward philosophy and the classical foundations of modern liberal philosophy than it is toward deeply situated historical inquiry. The book is admirably knowledgeable in its placement of Franklin in the stream of Western traditions in philosophy, morality, and civic duty. It is less deeply invested in placing Franklin squarely in his intellectual milieu, despite the wide citation of Franklin’s writings and reference to others in his many different circles.

This is to say that Smith Pangle’s goals regarding political philosophy don’t address Franklin’s political thinking as situated in his own day, amid the most important political, moral, and natural philosophers he knew, such as David Hume, Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, Adam Smith, and Voltaire. Although the book does spend a few pages on the physiocrats (32, 34, 168) and even mentions the problem of slavery in a putatively free society, Smith Pangle is much more concerned with political philosophy in its more general and comparative sense—more as philosophical axiology, which in most ways empties the word “political” of any local, contemporaneous meaning. Smith Pangle is much more in her element when making assessments across centuries, comparing Franklin to Aristotle or Socrates, and when discussing older commentaries on Franklin, such as those by Max Weber, D. H. Lawrence, or Carl Becker.

Smith Pangle’s strengths lie in her erudite and sweeping breadth of knowledge of different philosophical trends across time. She brings an impressive knowledge of philosophy and Western intellectual traditions to bear on the project, employing Franklin’s autobiography as a touchstone in many chapters, such as those on liberty, virtue, and civil associations; she includes commentary that ranges from a comparison of Franklin and Tocqueville to brief comparisons of Franklin with Ralph Waldo Emerson or Jonathan Edwards. Later chapters take up the larger philosophical concerns, such as Franklin’s views on reason and Christianity, the virtues of leaders in a democracy, and the civic benefits of religious practice. Those who study philosophy will appreciate the sheer learnedness Smith Pangle brings to the study—rightly called an “introduction” (1). Those of us searching for a more deeply situated analysis of Franklin’s political thought in his own contemporary situation will find the frequent recourse to the term “ambiguity” an unsatisfactory way to talk about the complicated audiences and problems Franklin faced in his own day.